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PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE TWENTY-FIFTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Monday, 8 October 1990, at 3 p.m.

President: Mr. de MARCO (Malta)

later: Mr. de L'ESTRAC (Mauritius)
(Vice-President)

- General debate [9] (continued)

  Statements made by

  Miss Chiepe (Botswana)
  Mr. Bugotu (Solomon Islands)
  Mr. Sey (Gambia)
  Mr. Sohahong-Kombet (Central African Republic)
  Mr. Rochereau de la Sabliere (France)

- Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations [125] (continued)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 9 (continued)

GENERAL DEBATE

Miss CHIEPE (Botswana): Allow me, Sir, at the outset to extend to you most sincerely the congratulations of my delegation on your election to the presidency of the forty-fifth session of the United Nations General Assembly. We are confident that under your wise and experienced leadership this session will be a successful one.

It is with a great sense of pride that I salute your predecessor for his very creative and productive stewardship of the forty-fourth session. The adoption by consensus of the historic Declaration on Apartheid, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and others carries the imprint of his inspired leadership of that session. We owe him a heavy debt of gratitude.

Under the steady, wise, careful and purposeful leadership of our Secretary-General, the United Nations has continued to make impressive strides in the quest for peace in our troubled world. A few months ago, we welcomed into the family of our world Organization the new, independent State of Namibia, free and sovereign at last, thanks to Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar's tenacity of purpose. We salute the Secretary-General.

I join those who spoke before me in extending to the Principality of Liechtenstein a warm welcome into the family of the United Nations. The addition of a Member to our Organization adds another step in its progress towards universality.

The orderly evolution of a logic of peace in international relations has continued to gather momentum despite intermittent spasms of crisis and conflict that occasionally threaten to restore the old order. The cold war can now safely be pronounced dead and buried. The Second World War has at long last lost its

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residual vestiges with the termination of the four allied Powers' troubled superintendency over Germany. Germany has been reunited. We share the joy of its people.

Polarized ideological lines between and among nations have become blurred, if not anachronistic. A new epoch in the march of our common history has begun in earnest. In the words of the Secretary-General,

"As we survey the political scene, we see the dawn of a new era in Europe, streaks of light in some regions and the darkness of old animosities and new hatreds enveloping others." (A/45/1, p. 3)

In Eastern Europe, we continue to be touched by the infectious spirit of renewal which has manifested itself in the inexorable resurgence of democratic pluralism. There has been pain and suffering in some of these dramatic developments, but, increasingly, the message they all convey is one of reconciliation and hope. We salute the architects of these positive developments and wish them well as they settle down to design new ways of life for their societies and fashion a new age for their beloved Europe.

The rest of our troubled world is not happy yet. Bloody civil wars have continued to unleash their all-consuming fury on innocent populations in many lands. Regional conflicts have yet to become a thing of the past, despite the end of the cold war from which they have often in the past derived their fuel, their raisons d'être. There is enough reason to hope, however, that the relaxation of tension between the East and the West will have a catalytic effect on the search for solutions to these conflicts. The guns of these wasteful conflicts, which have for so long been sowing death and destruction in Africa, Asia and Latin America, must be silenced.

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The situation in Afghanistan pains us a great deal. Why should Afghanistan continue to bleed so much, after the removal of foreign troops, which this Assembly demanded for almost a decade? The answer is that some parties to that tragic conflict have not shown any faith in the efficacy of the Geneva Agreements, having chosen a military solution to settle the conflict. This Assembly must insist on the implementation of the Agreements.

In South-East Asia, the intractable problem of Cambodia is now ripe for solution, if the very laudable efforts of the five permanent members of the Security Council can be nurtured to fruition. A national supreme council comprising the leaders of the warring factions has been established to administer the country during the implementation of a United Nations plan. This positive development represents a precious opportunity, not to be wasted in political posturing and wrangling. Cambodia and its people have suffered long enough.

Botswana welcomes the steps, however tentative, that have recently been taken by the two parts of Korea towards reconciliation and mutual accommodation. The recent meeting between the Prime Ministers of North and South Korea, it is to be hoped, signals the beginning of the end to the division of Korea, and the ushering in of a new era of reconciliation and peace for that troubled peninsula. We urge the two sides to deploy every effort to reunite their country.

There has still been no movement of note on the Cyprus question. We urge the parties to intensify their efforts, taking advantage of the increasingly effective good offices of the Secretary-General, to find a lasting solution to this vexing question.

We had all hoped that the end of the eight-year-long war between Iran and Iraq would usher in a new era of peace and stability in the Gulf. Our hopes have been shattered. The Gulf has once again become a cockpit of violent conflict. The

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brutal invasion and annexation of the small, peaceful Kingdom of Kuwait by Iraq has shocked us all. The invasion has had very serious reverberations all over the world, in keeping with the very sensitive nature of the Gulf area. A war psychosis has been stirred up over the crisis, with unpredictable consequences.

The ghastly reality of tens of thousands of foreign nationals who had been working and living peacefully in both Kuwait and Iraq and who suddenly find themselves stranded in the desert without food or shelter is an outrage to our humanity, to say the least. Even worse is the possible fate of those foreign nationals who remain in Iraq as hostages or human shields; or, worse still, of those who might be held hostage to hunger and starvation.

Iraq must heed the voice of reason, vacate Kuwait and restore its independence and sovereignty as demanded by resolutions of the Security Council, which Botswana fully supports. Aggression must not be allowed to pay.

It is our fervent hope that the crisis can still be resolved peacefully, for we shudder to contemplate the consequences of a violent solution. We hope that the leaders of Iraq will, sooner rather than later, find the wisdom and courage to extricate their country from the strait-jacket of defiance and bellicosity in which they have placed it.

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The fortunes and misfortunes of the Gulf are, of course, intertwined with those of the Middle East as a whole. The area remains one of endemic conflict and intractable problems. The Iraqi invasion of Kuwait exacerbates this unhappy state of affairs.

The bloody revolution of frustration that has been raging in the Israeli-occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip has now assumed the characteristics of a quiet, forgotten revolution. The Gulf crisis has become the dominant news item, and occupies the front burner of international concern and preoccupation. And yet, the Palestinian question remains very much alive and cries to the heavens for a solution. Nothing will deter the Palestinian people from continuing to yearn and struggle for a homeland of their own, and as long as this is the case, there will be no peace, no security and no stability in the Middle East, either for Israel or for its neighbours.

Botswana continues to hope that Israel will find the wisdom and courage to negotiate a lasting solution with the genuine leaders of the people of Palestine. Israel must, for the sake of its own survival, come to terms with the aspirations of the Palestinian people.

In Latin America, the Falklands issue remains unresolved, even though relations between the contending parties have improved considerably. It is our hope that the United Kingdom and Argentina will use these improved relations to negotiate an end to their dispute over the Falklands. The dispute cannot be wished away or ignored. The longer it is ignored, the more it will haunt and bedevil the peace and stability of the South Atlantic.

The brutal civil war goes on in El Salvador. War and suffering have become a way of life in that troubled country, and will remain so as long as the parties to that tragic conflict cannot stop the bloodshed and come to terms with the wrongs

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and injustices of their common past, and seek amicable solutions to them. The people of El Salvador deserve the peace envisaged for them and other Central American nations in Esquipulas II.

Let me now come closer to home. When we met here last year at the forty-fourth session, Mr. Nelson Mandela was still in prison. Prospects for change in South Africa were very dim. South Africa was still set in its violent and cruel ways, unrelieved even by the appearance on the political scene of a new leader of the National Party, whose statements seemed to convey a message of hope to a nopeless and desperate nation.

A year later, South Africa looks different. Mr. Mandela and his life-sentence colleagues have been released. Scores of other political prisoners have also regained their freedom. Two crucial talks between the African National Congress of South Africa (ANC) and the Government have been held - in Cape Town in May and in Pretoria in August - and have been pronounced a success.

The dramatic opening of a chink in the citadel of apartheid by President F. W. de Klerk on 2 February 1990 had been preceded by the adoption of the historic Declaraton on Apartheid and its Destructive Consequences in Southern Africa by the General Assembly at its forty-fourth session. Adopted by consensus, an historic achievement by itself, the Declaration states in paragraph 1:

> "A conjuncture of circumstances exists, which, if there is a demonstrable readiness on the part of the South African régime to engage in negotiations genuinely and seriously, given the repeated expression of the majority of the people of South Africa of their long-standing preference to arrive at a political settlement, could create the possibility to end apartheid through negotiations." (resolution S-16/1, annex)

The Cape Town and Pretoria Minutes, two of the most promising manifestations

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of the possibility of a negotiated and peaceful end to apartheid and its repressive structures, have changed the face of South Africa. The Minutes have not ended that tragic country's reputation for brutality and violence. They have not created the requisite atmosphere for full-fledged negotiations, and yet in a very real sense, the South African tragedy is ripe for solution, as never before, even in spite of the recent wave of violence.

Pretoria has gone some way in the implementation of the Declaration on Apartheid. The report of the Secretary-General, contained in document A/44/960 of 1 July 1990, gives credence to this assessment. Mandela and several other prisoners have been freed. The state of emergency has been lifted, except in Natal. Some apartheid laws, among them the Separate Amenities Act, have been repealed. Hospitals have been desegregated. And, finally, promises and assurances for more affirmative action on the remaining repressive laws have been made, particularly through the medium of ANC-Government talks.

"The prospect of a non-racial democracy in South Africa in the not-too-distant future is no longer unrealistic." (A/45/1, p. 5)

observes the Secretary-General in his incisive report on the work of our Organization. Indeed, all the leaders of South Africa, black and white alike, stand poised face to face with their most fateful moment of truth. A golden opportunity to collaborate in the shaping of a new South Africa has been landed on their lap. The opportunity must not be wasted. Thus far, the ongoing exploratory talks have been limited to two parties, the ANC and the National Party. The other parties have been derisive, hostile or dismissive about the talks, describing them as a sell-out, a charade or capitulation by the ANC.

Wisely, the ANC has made it clear that it does not consider itself the anointed and sole representative and spokesman of black South Africans.

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Mr. Mandela has called for the formation of a broad front of the black leadership to face the leaders of the white community at the conference table. We fully support that call, because in unity there is always strength, and black South Africa needs unity and strength.

The violence now ravaging the lives of hundreds of innocent people, black people, in the townships, must be dealt with by a black leadership that is united in purpose and determined in its commitment to the realization of the new South Africa we all seek. The new South Africa cannot be brought about in pools of innocent blood spilt by the crude weapons of tribalism, political factionalism and thuggery. Such a state of affairs can only retard, if not thwart, the process of change in South Africa.

This applies also to those in the white community whose "invisible hand" might be busy stoking the fires of a racial conflagration in a pernicious attempt to preserve the status quo. The onus is on the South African Government to seek out this invisible hand and cut it off to save the gains that have thus far been made in the quest for a new South Africa.

We are very worried that some elements in the South African police, encouraged and abetted by the right wing, may have thrown in their lot with those who seek to preserve the status quo at all costs, and are thus bent on ensuring that President de Klerk and Mandela are impeded in their efforts to prepare South Africa for change.

We are, nevertheless, convinced that change in South Africa is inevitable. The first bold steps towards a new South Africa have been taken. The United Nations and the world at large have encouraged peaceful change in the country, and must continue to do so. In the final analysis, however, the destiny of South Africa can be shaped only by its people.

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The people of Angola have suffered long enough. The civil war there is as senseless as ever. We are, however, encouraged by reports of progress in the recent talks between the Angolan Government and UNITA. It is hoped that the parties will declare a ceasefire and commence negotiations for a peaceful resolution of their conflict.

Angola's tragedy is Mozambique's tragedy. In Mozambique, too, an utterly senseless and brutal civil war has been wreaking unspeakable havoc on that war-weary country. The Government has long shown its readiness to negotiate with the rebels, who, unfortunately, have thus far failed to demonstrate any serious intention to respond positively. We urge those who still give sustenance to RENAMO, for whatever reason, to desist and thus save the people of Mozambique more senseless mayhem and bloodshed.

So long as the question of Western Sahara remains unresolved it cannot in reality be said that with Namibia's accession to independence in March this year Africa has rid itself of all vestiges of colonialism.

Fortunately, the way now seems to be clear for a solution that will end, once and for all, the painful colonial limbo in which the people of Western Sahara have been wallowing ever since the abdication of their former colonial Powers. The Secretary-General's report of 18 June 1990, contained in document S/21360, is encouraging indeed, containing, as it does, the rudiments of a proposal for the resolution of the Western Sahara question. It is our fervent hope that the parties will co-operate fully with the United Nations Secretary-General and the Chairman of the Organization of African Unity to develop and implement the proposals without delay.

As East-West tension gives way to global co-operation, the challenge now is how to take advantage of this climate for the benefit of all mankind. There are major challenges regarding means to safeguard the global environment in such a

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way that it can continue to sustain development far into the future, and also how to bridge the ever-increasing gap between the rich North and the poor South. We should now be able to direct more attention and effort towards increasing the well-being of our people.

In this context, we are encouraged to note that the dialogue towards realizing these objectives is already under way. The United Nations special session on international economic co-operation and the second United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, which was held recently, focused on issues such as our ever-increasing indebtedness and falling commodity prices. The lack of stability in the pricing of our commodities has made our products highly risky ones around which to plan our development. The crisis in the Gulf and the resultant sharp movements in oil prices will only compound the problem.

Our efforts to prime our economies will be to no avail unless the international community takes bold steps to address these problems, which are seriously affecting our development efforts.

We remain hopeful that the reduced defence spending in the industrialized world will release significant funds for foreign aid and that a fair portion of the so-called peace dividend will be channelled to the least-developed countries.

In addition to the two conferences that I have just mentioned, a conference on development in Africa was held in Maastricht, Holland, in June this year. This conference, which was co-chaired by the President of the Republic of Botswana and Mr. Robert McNamara, former President of the World Bank, addressed the economic problems facing sub-Saharan Africa. It was agreed that the development of Africa is a long-term process and that it must be a human-centred process. The achievement of food security and assured universal access to health care and to education and employment opportunities must be the primary objective of this process.

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The war against the scourge of narcotic drugs and their consequences is far from won. Demand for these dangerous drugs is as insatiable as ever, while the supply continues, unabated and inexhaustible. But we cannot afford to be daunted, for that would be tantamount to acquiescing in the needless destruction of generations of young people - mostly young people - who are being lost in ever-increasing numbers to an insidious drug culture. Those within whose borders drugs are produced must spare no effort to eradicate production, while those within whose borders the drugs are consumed must spare no effort to eradicate demand.

The adoption, on 30 September 1990, of the Declaration on the Survival, Protection and Development of Children represents a momentous milestone in the history of mankind. For the first time there is a universal commitment to the welfare of the child, to which Botswana is very proud to subscribe. The Botswana Government has always placed the plight of children at the top of the agenda of priorities in the formulation of its development policies. In Botswana, education - from primary school to university - is free. Current statistics indicate that 85 per cent of our children have access to formal education, at least at the primary level.

Botswana has also taken important strides in the provision of adequate health facilities. These have resulted, during the period since 1980, in a rapid reduction in the child mortality rate. In 1988 the immunization rate reached 98 per cent, and in the case of malnutrition the figure has now been reduced to under 1 per cent. Our commitment to primary health care remains the top priority in our development strategies.

Botswana has subscribed to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which was adopted last year at the forty-fourth session of the United Nations General Assembly. Together, the Convention and the Declaration on the Survival, Protection and Development of Children constitute a formidable foundation on which the future

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of our world's children can, and must, be securely constructed. It is our cherished hope that the spirit of 30 September 1990 will stiffen the resolve of nations to join forces to combat poverty, illiteracy, disease and unbridled population growth and thus create a better and safer world for our children.

The United Nations - this repository of the hopes and aspirations of mankind - has entered a new era. All those who have already spoken in this debate waxed poetic about the indestructible virtues of our Charter, to which, without exception, they reaffirmed their unswerving fidelity and commitment. They spoke eloquently about their determination to infuse the Organization with a new dynamism, a new mission, a new sense of purpose. Botswana shares fully these expressions of renewed faith and confidence in an Organization that, only a year ago, was reviled as an empty symbol. We, too, reaffirm our faith in it. It is our fervent hope that, in particular, the Security Council's new-found vitality, so amply demonstrated by the unusual facility and rapidity with which it has been reacting to the crisis in the Gulf, will be ardently sustained and replicated in respect of other crises.

Mr. BUGOTU (Solomon Islands): May I, on behalf of my Government and the people of Solomon Islands, congratulate you, Sir, on your election as President of the forty-fifth session of the United Nations General Assembly. It is my conviction that with your fine diplomatic skills and wealth of experience, the current session will be further enhanced by the successful and practical results we would all want.

I also wish to express my profound gratitude to your predecessor, Major General Joseph N. Garba of Nigeria, for his excellent leadership during the last session.

I wish to commend the Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, for his untiring efforts and his dedication towards realizing and upholding the principles and purposes of the United Nations.

On 12 October last year my Foreign Minister, Sir Baddeley Devesi, stood on this famous rostrum to voice - perhaps one could now say with hindsight - a somewhat over-zealous expression of optimism and trust in humankind and in the ability of the United Nations to influence man's desire for peace.

But world events today, as exemplified by the crisis in the Middle East, bear sad witness to the flagrant violation of the United Nations Charter. It has driven home to me and to my country, Solomon Islands, the frailty of man, his insatiable hunger for power, his oftentimes misplaced fervour and the temptation to dominate others outside the bounds of reason and rationality. It is even more disappointing and sad to know that while in the Gulf region last year the prospects for peace became visible with the United Nations-monitored cease-fire between Iran and Iraq, this year the "serpent's head" has emerged up once again in the same area of the world.

Notwithstanding that, we will not apologize for our optimism in the search for peace. What was said in this Assembly last year by Solomon Islands was said in good faith and still stands true today, namely that we must give peace a chance and

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not merely talk or preach about it. We believe we should not resign ourselves to accepting peace as an illusion to be couched in terms of what the great English and world statesman, Winston Churchill, would term a human tragedy.

My country, Solomon Islands, is a peaceful island nation. Peace is the only gift we can offer and contribute to this international body, the United Nations. We do not believe in guns or bullets, and so within the limits of our ability as a Christian nation, pray God, we have no enemies.

It is in this spirit of great concern for world peace that in a note verbale dated 10 August 1990, we immediately replied to the Security Council's call, through the Secretary-General, giving the Solomon Islands Government's assurances of its support for Security Council resolution 661 (1990) adopted on 6 August 1990, and the Government's commitment to implement the resolution to the limits of its ability as a comparatively small nation, and in concert with the aims of the Charter and the ideals and purposes of the United Nations.

Having said all that, and in consideration of peace in the global context, it is probably correct to say that no two countries can have the same perception of peace now in this modern world. Certainly, that would be true between a country with a highly developed technology and arsenals capacity, such as, for example, the United States, and a small developing country like the Solomon Islands with a simple village-life orientation.

Peace to a super-Power would not be too meaningful without the acceptance and assurance of military strength; whereas in the Solomon Islands we would regard the manufacture and stockpiling of modern weapons of war as inviting war itself. Unfortunately, the reality of our world today would tend to draw smaller countries like the Solomon Islands into conflicts that we do not really care for in the first place, and which we know we cannot expect to influence in any effective manner,

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outside of our humble attempts to contribute to peace and love in the practice of sharing and caring for the needs of others.

Of course, the scenario in other countries such as those of the Middle East with long historical backgrounds of warfare and with their endowments of rich oil deposits, which would enable them financially to arm themselves, would be entirely different. The only common denominator for achieving harmony in the world is peace and love, which is the only weapon Solomon Islands knows and believes in.

With the present turmoil in the Middle East it could be a good time for the world to take stock and to learn a few lessons. I venture to suggest three: first, man is a creature vulnerable to the misuse of power at any given time so we must all be alert to manifestations of this kind and help prevent such situations from arising; secondly, the super-Powers of the world must henceforth cease selling destructive weapons, both nuclear and conventional, to other countries, big or small, rich or poor, that do not yet possess them; and thirdly, the United Nations must seize the opportunity to take responsibility for world peace and not let individual countries believe that they can take unilateral decisions over military action in the world.

Only in times of peace can nations think rationally about their own needs, and about the assistance the one can give to the other. Only in peace-time can balanced judgements for aid assistance to developing countries by the more developed countries be made.

In the present climate of world tension all the noble thoughts of sharing and caring for one another have given way to amassing troops and weapons of war and round-the-globe visits in the name of diplomacy. The most powerful country in the world is now seeking financial aid from "friends" to contain the costs of an

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exercise which threatens world peace. It is ironic to note that money becomes available more readily in times of war than in times of peace.

There are, however, hopeful developments: the threat of war in the Middle East has brought the two super-Powers together and in Asia the two Koreas are moving in an unprecedented way towards reunification after 40 long years. The Cambodian factions have decided to talk with the blessing of the Soviet Union and China, while Iran and Iraq have exchanged prisoners of war. These are indeed encouraging signs for peace in the future, but we need not go to war or be threatened by the prospect of war to achieve harmonious international relations.

In the mean time my country, Solomon Islands, and its Pacific neighbours remain relatively peaceful. Pray God this will always be so. However, we do not wish to see our priorities, our important needs and what we value most in life - sovereignty and independence, the right to self-determination, a wholesome sea resource and no nuclear contamination of the sources of our livelihood - relegated to the back seat, pushed into the background and neglected by the world community because of a conflict and instability we had no hand in bringing about.

We are delighted that Japan, a leading member of our Pacific Community, has listened to our request and has taken the lead in banning drift-net fishing a year before the date set by a United Nations resolution. We have the highest regard for and a strong belief in the goodness of man and we therefore believe that Taiwan and Korea will soon follow suit.

We are moreover encouraged to hear of Japan's commitment to world peace and stability as expounded in this Assembly on 25 September 1990 by Mr. Taro Nakayama, the Foreign Minister of Japan.

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Japan, we have learned, in line with its Peace Constitution, is "firmly resolved not to become a military Power that could pose a threat to other nations of the world". (A/45/PV.7, p.26)

As a small nation in the Asia-Pacific region, Solomon Islands welcomes such a genuine commitment most sincerely.

Yet another welcome statement for today's world, with the background of the Middle East crisis, in the view of Solomon Islands was that delivered by Mr. Eduard Shevardnadze, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Soviet Union, also on 25 September 1990. It illuminates with common sense the abhorrence of the spread and proliferation of nuclear, chemical, bacteriological and missile weapons, which would destroy mankind and our world.

As recently as last Monday, from this very rostrum, the President of the United States of America, Mr. George Bush, expressed his yearning and desire that his great country rid this world of all these diabolical weapons of war. Solomon Islands wishes to commend such admirable leadership and would remind members of the fact that these commitments are enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

May I at this juncture explain that besides representing my country, Solomon Islands, I shall now speak briefly also as current Chairman of the Melanesian sub-group known as the Melanesian Spearhead Group of the South Pacific forum.

We applaud the efforts of independent organizations such as the Greenpeace Group and we praise our own South Pacific Forum for the fight they are leading to maintain a healthy environment in our region.

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We cannot understand why the United States and France especially - the two countries that have stood up traditionally as champions of freedom and that we regard as friends from our colonial past - cannot lend their ears to our genuine pleas to stop polluting the seas from which we draw our livelihood and sustenance. They continue to dump wastes and test their nuclear bombs in our fishing grounds. Yet we ourselves continue to love and respect them without restraint. We give them our votes and our support at various international forums, especially here at the United Nations and its various other organs.

With all due respect to the great country of France, which over the last 10 to 20 years has assured us that the Mururoa tests are safe and would not leak radiation for thousands of years to come, we have just learned with dismay from an American scientist that radioactive leaks have in fact taken place at Mururoa and that we can expect more leaks six years after every bomb is exploded by France.

France's indomitable love for the freedom of mankind led it, on 8 October 1886, to present to the people of the United States, and indeed the world, that unique reminder of the spirit of freedom - the wonderful Statue of Liberty, whose existence and beauty none of us in this honourable Assembly can deny.

When can we expect France to send a replica of that torch of freedom to shine over New Caledonia and its indigenous people and the peoples of the South Pacific?

The indigenous people of Tahiti, the Te Aho Maohi - whose territory has been occupied by France since 1842, nuclear bombs tested on its land and its seas polluted - has been waiting patiently in the wings, anxious to be reinscribed on the agenda of the United Nations Special Committee on the Implementation of the Declaration on Decolonization with the aim of gaining independence and becoming a member of this community of nations in its own right.

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In 1946 President Charles de Gaulle unilaterally withdrew Tahiti, together with New Caledonia, from the list of non-self-governing nations. I believe that there is now a new drive by the local indigenous people of the "Te Aho Maohi" to be reinscribed on the list of the Committee of 24, now that New Caledonia was successfully reinscribed on 2 December 1986.

Solomon Islands is pleased to have been one of the first countries to request on 10 October 1984 in the Assembly, the reinscription of our Melanesian brothers of New Caledonia, and today we ask once again that our Polynesian brothers of Tahiti be favoured in the same mamner by this world body, which believes in the legitimate freedom of man and of nations to look after their own affairs.

There can be no marking time any more. The United Nations, especially at this time, has shown and committed itself to act for what is right and against what is wrong in the world, and we are obligated by our Charter to stand up for the importance of the universal realization of the right of peoples to self-determination and of the speedy granting of independence to colonial countries and peoples for the effective guarantee and observance of human rights.

No other indigenous island people of the South Pacific in modern times has shed so much blood in the cause of freedom and independence as the natives of New Caledonia, and all they have so far received from France with respect to freedom and self-respect is the Matignon Accord which does not guarantee them independence.

May I conclude by humbly appealing to each and every one in this Assembly to look to the future with a new vision of peace and true equality of purpose. We are at the threshold of what we have been referring to lately as a new world order, with changing patterns of friendships and relationships between countries and peoples. Let us begin with love and respect for each other as individuals and fellow human beings with the right to live peacefully in this world. Only then shall we see the light ahead and give peace a chance.

Mr. SEY (Gambia): I should like first of all to congratulate you, Sir, on your unanimous election as President of the General Assembly at its forty-fifth session. Your election is a well-deserved recognition of your personal qualities and record of great distinction, as well as a fitting tribute to the role and stature of your country, Malta, in world affairs. My delegation is confident that under your presidency the forty-fifth session will make a decisive contribution to the promotion of world peace and security. While wishing you all success, I wish to assure you of my delegation's full support and co-operation throughout the session.

I should also like to place on record our sincere appreciation and thanks to your predecessor, Major-General Joseph Nanven Garba of Nigeria, for the exemplary manner in which he directed the work of the forty-fourth session of the General Assembly.

I also wish to pay a special tribute to our Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, for his tireless efforts geared towards achieving durable solutions to the numerous and seemingly intractable conflicts that threaten international peace and security.*

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* Mr. de L'Estrac (Mauritius), Vice-President, took the Chair.

(Mr. Sey, Gambia)

Let me also use this opportunity to welcome in our midst the Principality of Liechtenstein and the Republic of Namibia. The admission of Namibia into the comity of nations after decades of struggle against the illegal occupation of the country by South Africa is an occasion for self-congratulation by the United Nations, which had persistently championed the cause of freedom and independence for Namibia.

Twelve months ago, a wave of optimism was blowing through this Hall when delegation after delegation hailed the new era of rapprochement, détente and co-operation among nations, particularly between the two super-Powers. That optimism had since been validated by the agreements between the United States of America and the Soviet Union to reduce their stockpiles of chemical weapons and other weapons of mass destruction and to work towards resolving regional conflicts that threaten world peace and security.

But today the optimism and hopes of 12 months ago have been replaced by fear that the world is on the edge of a precipice. There is a serious danger of an eruption that can engulf many countries with military destruction and cause severe disruptions to the economies of all countries the world over. I am of course referring to the crisis in the Gulf region caused by the brutal and unprovoked invasion by Iraq of the small State of Kuwait.

The Iraqi invasion and annexation of Kuwait constitute naked aggression and a flagrant violation of the basic principles of civilized behaviour. It is, indeed, disheartening that, as we stand on the threshold of the twenty-first century, a country in dealing with its neighbours would resort to practices and actions that are reminiscent of the Dark Ages by using brute force to try to subdue and eradicate a weaker neighbour. Those practices are abominable and in this day and age unacceptable to the international community. The Gambia therefore condemns the

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invasion of Kuwait by Iraq, and from this rostrum I would like to renew our call for the total and unconditional withdrawal of Iraqi forces from Kuwait and the restoration of the legitimate Government of Kuwait. The tragic developments in the Gulf region have caused dismay and anxiety in the entire international community and, without a doubt, constitute a threat to world peace and security.

The response of the United Nations system to the crisis in the Gulf region has been laudable and the unanimity or near-unanimity on the various resolutions adopted by the Security Council augurs well for the United Nations as the only machinery for the maintenance of peace and security and for ensuring that all countries conform to acceptable patterns of behaviour in inter-State relations. With renewed optimism and faith in the relevance and role of the United Nations system, my delegation hopes that progress will be made in the resolution of long-standing disputes and conflicts that have long beset the international community.

The Middle East remains an area of tension with the question of Palestine as the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict. The people of Palestine continue to languish without a homeland of their own. Israel, in flagrant defiance of the international community, continues to consolidate its hold on the occupied Arab territories.

No positive developments have taken place since the Palestinian people, in the face of oppressive measures by Israel, decided in December 1987 to launch the heroic intifidah and thereafter, out of sheer good will, made many concessions in the search for genuine peace and security. In this regard we cannot but remain deeply concerned over the continued denial by Israel - in spite of General Assembly and Security Council resolutions - of the inalienable right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and independent nationhood. We therefore share the belief that a just and comprehensive settlement resides in the speedy convening of

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an international peace conference on the Middle East, under United Nations auspices, with the full participation of the Palestine Liberation Organization as the sole and legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 38/58 C.

For a long time the situation in South Africa has been in the forefront of the main concerns of the United Nations. It is a fact that a glimmer of hope had been generated by the measures taken last February by President De Klerk, including the release of Mr. Nelson Mandela and other political prisoners, as well as the partial lifting of the state of emergency. The commencement of a dialogue between the South African authorities and the African National Congress of South Africa (ANC) is another development that offers a real opportunity that could lead to a negotiated settlement.

It must be emphasized, however, that recent developments are just a beginning and that a lot more remains to be done to reverse the situation in South Africa, for the main pillars of apartheid remain intact despite the apparent show of good will to move away from that criminal and violent system. It is for this reason that sanctions and other pressures which have so far succeeded in compelling the Pretoria régime to make concessions should be maintained and intensified. My delegation believes that it would be premature to relax tensions at this stage as that would send the wrong signals and abort the process towards negotiations which has already commenced. As stated in the Harare Declaration, sanctions and other pressures against the apartheid régime must be maintained until change is clearly irreversibly secured and a non-racial, united and democratic society is established in South Africa.

It is, however, unfortunate that the process towards dismantling the system of apartheid seems threatened by an upsurge in violence between rival black organizations in South Africa. That state of affairs will not only divert

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attention from the main struggle against a common enemy, but can also play into the hands of those who are bent on perpetuating racism and the exploitation of the black man in South Africa. My delegation therefore appeals to all progressive and democratic forces in South Africa to put an end to the internecine violence that threatens to derail the campaign for the total eradication of apartheid.

Elsewhere in the African continent we are faced with a very serious situation in the Republic of Liberia, where a civil war erupted in December last year. The international community has watched with horror and dismay the degeneration of the conflict into tribal warfare with massive destruction of property and the massacre of thousands of civilians, some of whom had sought sanctuary in churches, hospitals and diplomatic missions. The civil war has also trapped thousands of foreign nationals without any means of escape or protection.

The result of all this has been a state of anarchy and a total breakdown of law and order. These developments have traumatized the Liberian population and greatly shocked the people of the subregion and led to hundreds of thousands of Liberians being displaced and made refugees in neighbouring countries.

The last summit of the Authority of Heads of State and Government of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), which met in Banjul, the Gambia, last May, reviewed the situation in Liberia and expressed grave concern over the conflict and called on all parties concerned to agree to an immediate cessation of hostilities. At the same time, the Authority established an ECOWAS Standing Mediation Committee as an instrument for encouraging the peaceful settlement of disputes in the subregion.

Soon after the May summit and with the situation in Liberia rapidly deteriorating, the Chairman of the Authority, Alhaji Sir Dawda Kairaba Jawara, President of the Gambia, convened a meeting of the Mediation Committee at the

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ministerial level, and after all parties to the conflict had indicated their acceptance of mediation by ECOWAS a series of meetings were held in Freetown, Republic of Sierra Leone, to try to seek a peaceful resolution of the conflict in Liberia.

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Despite the great effort made at the various meetings at the ministerial level, it did not produce the result desired by the people of Liberia and the international community.

It is against that background that the Heads of State and Government of the ECOWAS Standing Mediation Committee met in Banjul in August where they decided to assume their responsibility of ensuring that peace and stability was maintained within the subregion, for they believed that the tragic situation in Liberia posed a threat to the peace and stability of the area. The outcome of the deliberations was the ECOWAS peace plan which has three basic elements: first, the observance of a cease-fire by all the parties to the conflict; secondly, the establishment of a cease-fire monitoring group (ECOMOG) to supervise and ensure compliance with the cease-fire; and, thirdly, the formation of an interim government to administer the country and organize free and fair elections under international supervision leading to a democratically elected government.

When the Committee met and adopted those proposals, every member State of ECOWAS was duly informed and requested to support the initiative. There were no contrary views at that time. It must also be pointed out that at the time of adoption of the peace package to which I have referred, two of the warring parties had accepted both a cease-fire and a peace-keeping force. Thus, the ECOMOG force was sent to Liberia after the acceptance of the cease-fire and it was only against that background and in view of the rapidly deteriorating situation that ECOMOG went in. It must however be made very clear that the situation would have been far worse if nothing had been done at the time. In other words, the effect of not doing something would have been disastrous. Since the arrival of the ECOMOG force thousands of foreign nationals have been evacuated, a hospital rehabilitated and relief supplies made available to the population.

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At about the same time as ECOMOG was deployed, a national conference of all Liberian political parties, professional and other interested groups was held in Banjul from 27 August to 4 September to deliberate on the crisis in Liberia and to establish an interim government. And it should be noted that this conference was attended only by Liberians and its deliberations were conducted solely by Liberians. The representation at the national conference was broad-based and two of the warring factions took part in the deliberations. After six days of extensive discussions and negotiations, the conference established an Interim Government of National Unity comprising representatives of a cross-section of the entire Liberian population and provided openings for the participation of groups which had not even attended the national conference. After the national conference, a delegation of the Interim Government was dispatched to meet the warring faction which refused to take part in the deliberations, with a view to persuading them to accept and participate in the Interim Government. For this reason the composition of the Interim Government has not been officially announced pending the outcome of these consultations.

At the level of ECOWAS, there have been calls for the convening of an extraordinary summit. The Gambia as Chairman has no objection to the holding of an extraordinary summit but, according to the ECOWAS rules of procedure, a majority of two-thirds of the members is required before an extraordinary summit is convened. The Chairman of the Authority is currently carrying out consultations with his colleagues on this issue, and an extraordinary summit will be convened soon after and the required number of countries have indicated their consent.

ECOMOG has now embarked on its important and historic mission and it is concerned not only with enforcing the cease-fire, but also with ensuring that the necessary conditions are created for much-needed humanitarian assistance to reach the people of Liberia. I therefore wish to make a solemn appeal to all Liberians,

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especially the leaders of the warring factions, to co-operate with the ECOMOG force and to give it all the assistance and co-operation it needs in the fulfilment of its mission. Similarly, I wish, on behalf of the Chairman of the Authority of ECOWAS, to appeal to all countries that have any influence on the National Patriotic Front of Liberia to urge the leadership of that group to join their fellow Liberians in the ongoing dialogue aimed at implementing the ECOWAS peace plan formulated in Banjul so that the suffering of the people of Liberia can be brought to an end and peace and stability restored in Liberia.

It is also our fervent hope that the international community, particularly the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity, will continue to support the ECOWAS peace plan, which is the only viable alternative to continued bloodshed and destruction of property. I also wish, on behalf of ECOWAS, to appeal to the entire international community to contribute to the Special Fund for ECOMOG Operations in Liberia as well as to respond generously and expeditiously to the various appeals by the Chairman of the Authority of ECOWAS for the provision of humanitarian assistance in the form of food and medicines to the suffering peoples of Liberia.

Only a few days ago we witnessed the reunification of Germany, which indeed is the final act announcing the end of the cold war. We congratulate the German people on this historic occasion and hope that it will usher in a new era of peace, understanding and closer co-operation in Europe and beyond.

The Gambia welcomes the current efforts of the two Koreas geared towards the speedy reunfication of that divided country in accordance with the legitimate aspirations of their peoples. It is the view of the Gambia that the admission of the two Koreas to the United Nations, in accordance with the principle of universality, will facilitate the eventual peaceful reunification of North and South Korea.

(Mr. Sey, Gambia)

With regard to Afghanistan, we are deeply distressed that in spite of the withdrawal of foreign troops the region remains charged with tension seriously affecting international peace and stability. We therefore urge all the parties concerned to abide by the Geneva Agreements and make every effort in the quest for a peaceful settlement of their differences.

Although the international political scene has been showing some positive trends, we are very much concerned that international economic prospects remain somewhat bleak. Slow or negative growth and the persisting debt problem are causing a further deterioration in the quality of life in developing countries. Despite a healthy 3.6 per cent growth in industrialized countries in 1989, external imbalances remain critical. Growth in developing countries slowed to 3.3 per cent in 1989, compared to the decade's 4.3 per cent average. Present international economic and trade arrangements, fluctuating commodity prices and unresolved monetary issues perpetuate severe inequalities and continue to promote an unfair and inequitable transfer of resources from the developing countries to developed countries. Many Governments have undertaken structural reforms in order to revitalize their economies but their efforts have been impeded by severe social and political obstacles, as amply highlighted in the consensus Declaration adopted by the General Assembly's eighteenth special session.

The development crisis is dramatized by the plight of the least developed countries, which have been facing formidable structural difficulties and experiencing extreme deterioration in their overall socio-economic situation.

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The targets set out in the Substantial New Programme of Action adopted by the General Assembly in 1981 have not been attained. In this connection, we would like to underscore the significance of enhanced international efforts to reactivate growth and development in the least developed countries. We fully support the recommendations of the second United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, held in Paris last month, aimed at assisting these countries to place their economies on the path of sustained growth and development.

The development and protection of children are other important issues on the global agenda. The Gambia, at the very onset, fully endorsed the initiative of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) for convening the World Summit for Children this year. May I therefore take this opportunity to extend our congratulations to the organizers for the success of the Summit, at which the Gambia was represented by a high-level delegation led by President Jawara, whose Government's solemn commitment to accord the highest priority to the protection of the rights of the child and the mother is well known.

We therefore remain hopeful that the adoption of the historic Declaration of the Summit and of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child will undoubtedly lead to and enhance the development and protection of the rights and needs of children.

The issue of human rights today has assumed great importance and prominence in world affairs. We in the Gambia have always been deeply rooted in our declared commitment to the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms. We cannot therefore remain indifferent to the violations to which these rights are being subjected in other parts of the world. In view of the widening gap between the universally accepted norms of human rights and the stark reality in

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many parts of the world, the Gambia, motivated purely by special concern for the individual and his freedom and dignity, holds the considered view that a world-wide and forceful campaign should be mounted with the support of the appropriate United Nations machinery to intensify our efforts in order to achieve a better and more effective compliance with the generally accepted norms in the field of human rights. In this regard, specific steps within each region should be encouraged towards the institutionalization of the observance and enforcement of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

In the same vein, the Gambia would like to register its total support for the convening of a world conference on human rights in accordance with decision 1990/110 of the Human Rights Commission. The Gambia Government, meanwhile, will continue to co-operate fully with the human rights agencies within the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity (OAU).

We would in this context like to acknowledge with deep appreciation the assistance being rendered by the United Nations Commission on Human Rights to the African Centre for Democracy and Human Rights Studies, which since its establishment has actively collaborated with the African Commission on Human and People's Rights, as well as to those who share the Gambia's concerns for respect and protection of both individual and collective liberties. Furthermore, my delegation would also like to renew its support for the proposal made by the Federal Republic of Germany last year to appoint a United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

Let me now conclude my statement. As we draw closer to the advent of the twenty-first century mankind is witnessing a unique period in relations among States, a period of peace characterized by international co-operation and solidarity. The emerging order, however, appears to be limited so far to international political relations. My delegation is concerned that this dynamic

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process will be incomplete if it is not accompanied by profound changes in international economic relations. The two must go together, to reflect the interdependent nature of our world. Multilateral diplomacy is one way, if not the best way, to achieve this goal. It is not superfluous to reiterate that the United Nations serves that purpose best not because it fulfils the role of the world's parliament but because it achieves results in the sole and supreme interests of peace and security. We hope that the forty-fifth session will be notable for its achievements and will continue to serve as a beacon of hope and inspiration for the primary purpose of advancing peace and harmony among nations.

Mr. SOHAHONG-KOMBET (Central African Republic) (interpretation from French): The current international backdrop to this session of the General Assembly of the United Nations, which was founded in 1945 out of the ashes of the Second World War so as to prevent any recurrence of war, has brought our institution closer to its original purposes and principles than ever before.

This unprecedented moment, which we trust will leave its lasting and indelible mark on the human spirit and on the conduct of nations, is characterized by the following: growing awareness of States of their interdependence; the will, and henceforth the collective resolve of States, to try to improve their mutual relations by way of dialogue, harmony and co-operation; and the slow but persistent efforts to establish a new world order better suited to take account of the values of freedom, democracy, ideological openness and economic and social development.

The admission of the Republic of Namibia to membership in our Organization attests to the major changes occurring today and confers upon the Assembly the further prestige that has so long been awaited.

I am here today to express the Central African Republic's deep desire to see this new effort by the community of nations to bring greater serenity to

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international relations take root, and at the same time to state my country's concerns over the serious uncertainties still weighing over the future of mankind and jeopardizing the developments in progress.

Before doing so, I should like first to extend to the Republic of Namibia and to the Principality of Liechtenstein the warmest congratulations of the Central African Republic on their admission to membership in the United Nations; this has brought the goal of universality of our Organization closer to realization.

(Mr. Sohahong-Kombet, Central African Republic)

My country extends to its sister Republic, Namibia, its best wishes for success and prosperity in building up the nation, and trusts that the same spirit of collective solidarity it earned by the nobility and maturity of its struggle for independence will be turned to the advantage of the new State.

I extend my country's thanks to Mr. Joseph Garba for the successful way in which he carried out his mandate as President of the Assembly at its last session, and I express my deep conviction that this session will be equally successful, given your outstanding qualities and your mastery of the international scene.

His Excellency General André Kolingba, President of the Republic, Head of State, provided eloquent proof of his constant faith in the objectives and ideals of the United Nations by taking part personally in the World Summit for Children. In that spirit, he extends his warm wishes for the success of the Assembly's work, and once again reaffirms his deep gratitude to the Secretary-General of our Organization for his tireless and unceasing commitment to restoring to the United Nations the political and moral authority it needs to handle multilateralism in a world in the throes of change.

In response to the long-frustrated wishes of the majority of peoples on the planet that the infernal cycle of the arms race should be brought to a halt, there has bloomed a new spirit of détente, compromise, concertation and co-operation, whose most obvious effects are now being seen in all aspects of the relations almost all States maintain with each other. This spirit is one cast in the form of a modern-day crusade in two directions: reducing the likelihood of military confrontations; and thawing out the ideological competition.

The resurgence of interest in restoring international peace and security which this demonstrates is reflected in the desire to redress several situations in which

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there is latent or explosive tension that, through their persistence, have for a long time tended to destabilize international relations. The main examples of this resurgence are:

The achievement of significant results in the negotiations between the United States and the Soviet Union towards reducing their nuclear arsenals. These are most praiseworthy efforts, which should be taken up by other countries, in order to render meaningless the balance of terror on which relations between States have so far been based;

The beginning of a fruitful dialogue in South Africa, the final stage of which will necessarily involve the eradication of apartheid, the advent of a democratic society, and the more harmonious coexistence of all the States of the subregion;

The initiatives at the world and subregional levels to find, by means of law alone, a settlement to the frontier dispute between Chad and Libya, and to put an end to the devastating consequences of the situations still prevailing in Angola, Western Sahara, Liberia, Cyprus, Afghanistan, Cambodia, El Salvador and Guatemala;

The unanimous reaction of the international community that Iraq should abide by the principles of international law violated by its invasion and annexation of Kuwait;

The constructive attitude evinced by the concert of nations over the reunification of Yemen and of Germany. Here, we would salute the far-sightedness of those who brought this reunification about.

The Central African Republic, which has always made dialogue for peace the basic principle of its domestic and foreign policies, welcomes the renewed interest shown by States' collective and resolute crusade for the great trends underpinning, through compromise and concertation, the preservation of world security.

(Mr. Sohahong-Kombet, Central African Republic)

In Lebanon, sovereignty and territorial integrity have not yet been fully recovered. Israel has a right to a legal existence in a context of peaceful coexistence with the other States in the region. Palestine's dream of a national homeland should cease to be vain and illusory. In the Korea peninsula, the effects of international détente should lead to a quickening by the two States of an independent and peaceful reunification process.

All those situations, by the risks and dangers they entail, are severely limiting the hopes born of the crusade of which I spoke; that crusade is to a great degree selective, defending the major and immediate interests of the great nations of the world.

Allied to the crusade for peace, since the winds of freedom have become a constant in the countries of Eastern and Central Europe and the democratic movement has established itself, there has been a second type of crusade, one directed towards making respect for democratic values and for human rights a universal model. The Central African Republic, while recognizing the inadequacies of the approach, which has often generated confusion about the nobility of the objective, has since 1981 endorsed those concerns of the international community, through the leadership of General Kolingba, President of the Republic and Head of State.

The state of law now in force goes hand-in-hand with a political philosophy of patience and tolerance, and includes a multitude of areas: apart from the traditional separation of the executive, the legislature and the judiciary, there are the multiplicity of candidates in free and democratic elections; freedom of speech; freedom of movement; proscription of arbitrary acts and degrading treatments; harmony and concord between all sectors of the population; and open dialogue with civilian society - in short, human rights receive greater protection and more guarantees.

(Mr. Sohahong-Kombet, Central African Republic)

These immense democratic gains, which are unprecedented in the history of the Central African Republic, are to be consolidated and expanded by the next congress of our party, the Central African Democratic Assembly; it will do so in strict conformity with the attitudes and characteristics of the Central African people's civilization.

Democracy, which is a product of history and of the state of mind of peoples, by reason of its many demands requires of nations an equally determined crusade for development. The never-equalled contribution of the Western States to those of the East, made with a view to stabilizing the democratic advances there, is in this respect indicative of the spirit of solidarity we expect the world to show the States of Africa, Asia and Latin America, which are facing the harsh trials of destitution and poverty, and are going under, while the North turns a blind eye.

(Mr. Sohahong-Kombet, Central African Republic)

The last issue, which is truly crucial to the future of international relations, is the question of the situation of the poorest countries in the world. That situation, which has often been mentioned from this rostrum, is worsening as the years pass by.

There is enormous uncertainty in this area at this time because although there is an encouraging shift towards economic recovery in the developed countries at this time of economic crisis which is disrupting the world, most developing countries, particularly those in Africa, are still suffering greatly from the impact of this economic crisis.

The development programmes of many of those countries, such as the Central African Republic, have been crushed, under the joint impact of the adverse factors of a continuing drop in commodity prices - and their economies largely depend on commodities - under the burden of debt and because of the negative net transfer of capital away from them.

Despite the real efforts and the sacrifices made, often at enormous cost, to take initiatives for development, nothing that would really promote continuing and lasting economic progress has really been achieved. The growth rate is still close to zero in these countries, and this is a point that was made in the World Bank report for 1989 on development in the world.

The hopes born at the time of the adoption of the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development have given place to apprehension in the face of the rather selective and limited implementation of the programme by the developed countries. This also shows that there has been a drop in multilateralism despite the assurances resulting from the special session of the General Assembly devoted to international economic co-operation, held last April.

(Mr. Sohahong-Kombet, Central African Republic)

New initiatives and new measures must be envisaged at a time when the burden of the consequences of the situation in the Arab-Persian Gulf has to be taken into account so that these countries are not excluded from development definitively.

What is needed are appropriate programmes that would transform the productive structures and create conditions for sustained and lasting economic progress and that would thus lead to a resumption of economic growth and development in those countries. In fact, these are precisely the conclusions arrived at at the second United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, which was held recently in Paris. The Central African Republic welcomed that Conference, in particular because it is itself a developing, land-locked and least developed country.

My delegation hopes that the Declaration adopted at the end of that Conference and the 12 measures announced in support of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s will, in fact, be given practical effect on the basis of a stronger partnership so that these countries will have the bases for sustained and lasting development.

Given the interdependence between the developing and the developed countries, we would also like to see greater solidarity and more dynamism so as to promote the mutual search for the conditions required for prosperity and development for all.

The proposal by Senegal, India, Venezuela and Egypt for resumption of the North-South dialogue is part of this overall approach, and we would like to see it implemented.

If we are to have this world of solidarity, which recognizes the values of peace, democracy and development, which we all whole-heartedly long for, then we have to find solutions to all the pending problems. In addition, what is needed is that States endeavour to work for these values so that the values may spread throughout the world.

(Mr. Sohahong-Kombet, Central African Republic)

If the uncertainties in international relations today reflect the limits of States' commitments to these values in their mutual relations, then these values, which underlie the international community, will not survive for long.

This session, which is the forty-fifth anniversary of the founding of our Organization, must give States an opportunity to think together, collectively, about what path they should take to develop and strengthen their capacity regularly to review these values.

At a time when the United Nations Decade for International Law is just beginning, States must renew their commitment to the Charter, which organizes multilateral co-operation for a common world of peace, development and solidarity, based on the primacy of law and universal respect for human rights.

The PRESIDENT: I shall now call on those representatives who wish to speak in exercise of the right of reply.

May I remind members that, in accordance with General Assembly decision 34/401, statements in exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and to five minutes for the second, and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. ROCHEREAU de la SABLIERE (France) (interpretation from French): In his statement this afternoon, the Permanent Representative of the Solomon Islands challenged my country in connection with underground nuclear tests being carried out by France on its territory in Mururoa. I would like to recall that those tests which, I emphasize, are underground, are in no way detrimental to the health of the people of the region or to the environment, as can be seen from scientific studies carried on by international missions made up of outstanding scientists. These studies are available to everyone.

(Mr. Rochereau de la Sabliere, France)

The representative of the Solomon Islands also referred to the situation in the French overseas Territories in the Pacific. The right of peoples to self-determination is a fundamental principle enshrined in the Constitution of France. It is part of our tradition, which goes back to the French revolution. The people of French overseas Territories can express their choice at elections which are held regularly.

As for the Matignon Agreements, which were mentioned by the speaker, the objective was to ensure that the peoples involved could state their position freely and under the best possible conditions as to what their future should be.

Mr. BUGOTU (Solomon Islands): We have no argument with the statement of the representative of France, except with regard to the facts as we understand them. With a view to controlling arguments of this kind, we suggest that France ask the United Nations to take charge of the scientists who go, for example, to Mururoa. We have heard so many stories. The people of the Pacific do not understand nuclear tests. We have a right to know what is going on, but all that we hear are arguments from both sides.

As I have said, the United Nations should be responsible for the scientists who go to Mururoa, so that it may see the situation for itself. It should also look into the question of independence for the Te Aho Maohi - the Tahitian people. We do not want to interfere with the French territory as such. However, there are pressures on us, and we have information from the other side. We want the United Nations to help us to establish whether that information is right or wrong.

AGENDA ITEM 125 (continued)

SCALE OF ASSESSMENTS FOR THE APPORTIONMENT OF THE EXPENSES OF THE UNITED NATIONS (A/45/515/Add.3)

The PRESIDENT: I should like to draw the Assembly's attention to document A/45/515/Add.3, which contains a letter addressed to me by the Secretary-General informing me that, since the issuance of his communications dated 18 and 25 September and 2 October 1990, the Dominican Republic has made the necessary payment to reduce its arrears below the amount specified in Article 19 of the Charter.

May I take it that the General Assembly duly takes note of this information?

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 5.05 p.m.